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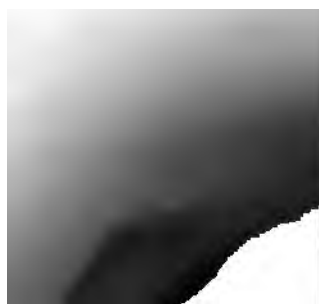
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AN
AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT
OF THE LATE
EXPEDITION TO BULAM,
ON THE
COAST OF AFRICA;
WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT SETTLE-
MENT OF
SIERRA LEONE,
AND THE ADJACENT COUNTRY.

By J. MONTEFIORE.

L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
PAUL LE MESURIER,
LORD MAYOR OF THE CITY OF LONDON,
AND ONE OF THE TRUSTEES
OF THE
BULAM ASSOCIATION,

THIS AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT IS INSCRIBED,
BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBEEDIENT SERVANT,

J. M.



P R E F A C E.

THE curiosity of the public has been much excited, by the late unfortunate expedition to Bulam,* wherein a number of persons

* Towards the latter end of the year 1791, several gentlemen formed themselves into a society, for the purpose of endeavouring to establish a settlement, or colony, on some eligible spot on or near the coast of Africa; and being tempted by the flattering information they had received of the island of Bulam, they resolved to open a subscription for raising a sum of money to enable them to proceed in the undertaking, and that every subscriber who was willing to become a settler in the intended colony, should receive, immediately on possession being taken of the said island, or any other spot on the coast of Africa, whereon a settlement might be made, a grant of five hundred acres of land for the sum of thirty pounds, and in that proportion for

sons sacrificed their lives to that desire of
emigration, which prompted me also to
quit

for any greater or less number of acres, as far as two thousand, that he might be desirous of obtaining ; that each person who subscribed as an absentee purchaser of land should be entitled to a grant of five hundred acres for the sum of sixty pounds, and in that proportion for any other number of acres. In the space of a month after the opening of the subscription near nine thousand pound was paid into the hands of the trustees* towards the expedition, which enabled them to purchase a considerable investment of merchandize for the purpose of bartering for the island, for the convenience of traffic, and for the hire of labour to be applied to erecting accommodations for the settlers, and cultivating the expected territory. The trustees soon after engaged a number of yeomen and labourers to go from England, and chartered the Calypso and Hankey, two

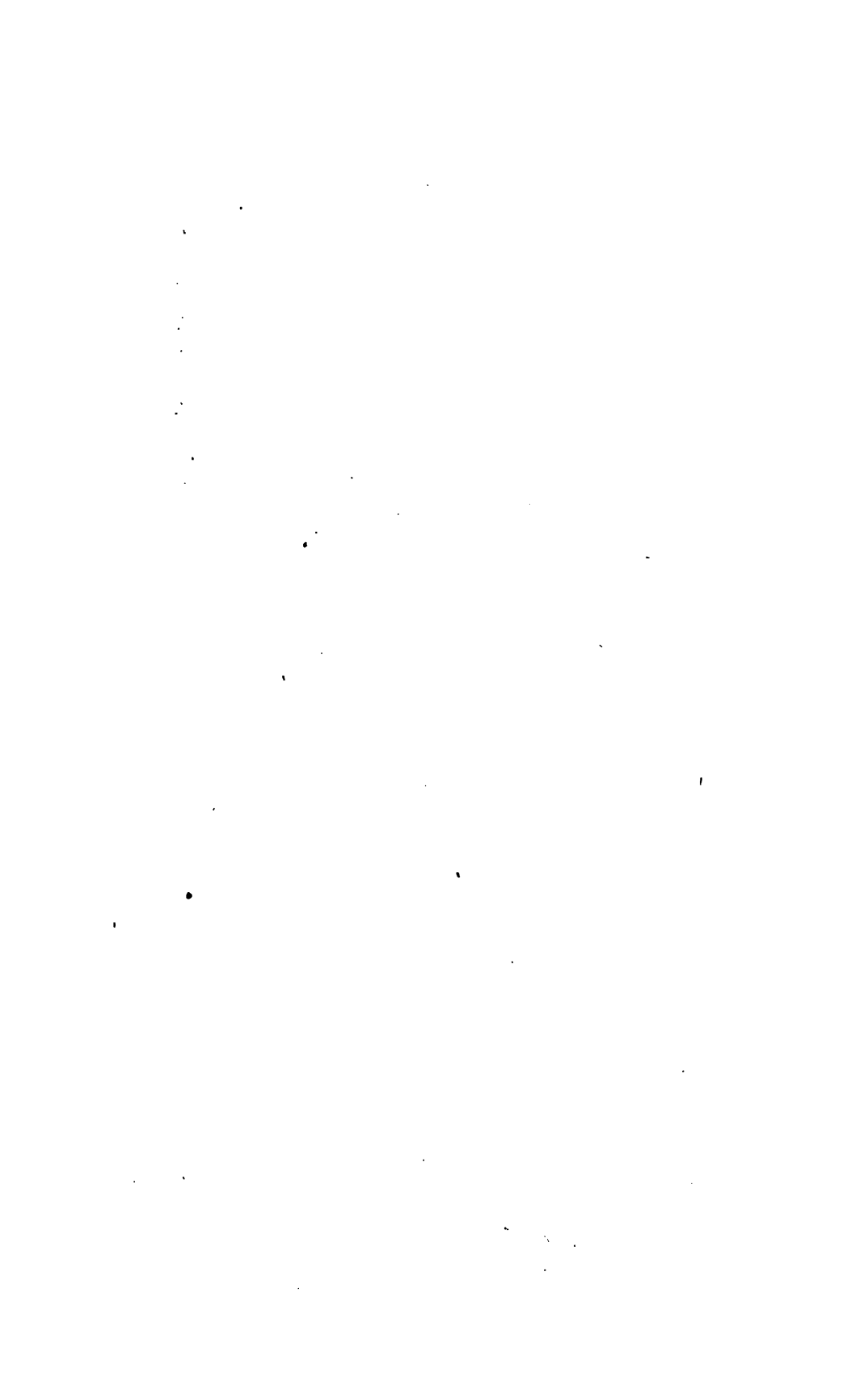
* Paul Le Mesurier, Esq. M. P.
James Kirkpatrick, Esq.
George Hartwell, Esq. and
Moses Ximenes, Esq.

quit my native country ; and on my arrival from Africa I had repeated applications, from the relatives of many of the adventurers, for information concerning the place of our settlement. These circumstances, added to the importunity of several very respectable characters, as well subscribers to the Sierra Leone Company, as to the Bulam Association, have induced me to publish this brief but authentic narrative of the undertaking ; together with a concise account of the Sierra Leone Colony, and the adjacent country.

vessels of about three hundred tons each, and also purchased the Beggar's Benison, a sloop of between thirty and forty tons, for their accommodation. They supplied the vessels most amply with stores and provisions, and likewise plantation tools for the use of the settlers, on their arrival in Africa, who were in number about three hundred, and also furnished them with the necessary assortments of arms and ammunition.

The reader will, perhaps, be surprised to see the work contained in so small a compass : but his astonishment will cease, when he is informed, that I have written only strict matter of fact, with the most scrupulous adherence to truth. It would indeed have been no difficult task to have augmented the bulk of the following tract, by adopting a method too common in performances of this nature, writing from invention, and supplying from the sources of fancy that industry, which has been wanting in observation. But I pledge myself to prove, by respectable witnesses, the authenticity of every incident I have related : and though my book may not recommend itself by its magnitude, yet I have some reason to expect the favour of the public, from the purity of the motives with which I have been influenced in its composition. As I originally

ginally wrote this account for the satisfaction of a friend, and communicated it to him in letters, when every object was present before me, I have not thought proper to alter its epistolary form. I can only add, that it would have been more pregnant with information, had I enjoyed better health and more leisure to collect materials.



A N
AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT
OF THE
LATE EXPEDITION
TO
B U L A M.

Sierra Leone, 3d Sept. 1792.

INDISPOSITION will not permit me to give you that minute detail of our expedition to Bulam, which I promised when I left England ; but being persuaded various will be the accounts transmitted to Europe of our undertaking, by several of the subscribers, I am induced, however inadequate to the task, to trouble you with my relation. After a tedious passage from Gravesend, we arrived at Teneriffe, in the Calypso, the 4th

B

day

day of May last, having parted company with the Hankey and Beggar's Benison, in a gale of wind, two days after our departure from the Isle of Wight. On our arrival, we flattered ourselves with the pleasing hope of procuring fresh provisions; but were disappointed by the unprecedented behaviour of Mr. Dalrymple, our Governor, who declared, when he went on shore at the Health Office, that we had the small-pox on board our vessel. Of course we were immediately ordered to depart the place, otherwise the fort would fire on us. This might have been avoided, by keeping the few that were sick of the small-pox confined at times to their cabins. The settlers on board the Hankey had likewise the small-pox; but Mr. Bever, the superintendant of that ship, having taken proper steps, received every refreshment the island afforded.

Our departure from Teneriffe, without our expected supplies, of which we were

much in want, quite disheartened our people, several being ill from living on salt provisions. In our passage from Teheriffe, we saw the noted peak, at upwards of twenty leagues distance. It is an ascent in the form of a sugar-loaf, about fourteen miles in circumference, and two miles perpendicular. The island appeared pleasant and fertile; the town large and handsome, and the houses well built.

Contrary to our first intention of sailing to St. Jago, which in England we were given to understand was the place appointed to meet the Hankey and Beggar's Benison, we made sail for Goree, and arrived there on the 13th of May. This Island is situated very near Cape Verd, in Lat. $14^{\circ} 43'$ N. Long. $17^{\circ} 20'$ W. It derives its name from a town in Holland, the Dutch having been the first possessors. In the course of several wars it has been taken and retaken by different powers; and is now in the

possession of the French, having been delivered up to them by us at the peace of 1783.

The island is small, not exceeding two miles in circumference ; but is particularly well situated for trade, being so near Cape Verd. On my landing, I found it very difficult to get to the beach, a violent surf continually beating upon it. The Governor has a good house, and a garden laid out with great taste and elegance. The cotton tree and indigo plant thrive here very well, but the climate is not favourable for the cultivation of any sort of esculent vegetables. Most of their provision is brought either from France or from the neighbouring continent : even their water they are obliged to procure from the latter. The flux, and fevers, owing to the unwholesomeness of the air, were the predominant diseases at Goree. We found here plenty of fish, very few fowls, and those at an extravagant

gant price ; for sugar, I was obliged to give 3s. 6d. sterling a lb. for chocolate 10s. and every other article was proportionably dear : the inhabitants not having received, for upwards of twelve months past any supplies from France, on account of the late revolution. A factory slave ship, being at anchor in the harbour, I went on board, and breakfasted with the factor ; who, on my departure, made me a present of a loaf of soft bread, which, believe me, was a great treat.

On the 15th, some of our ladies went on shore to the Governor's, and were very politely entertained. He gave them a ball at night, and a supper ; but you will conceive how short of fresh provisions they were, when you are informed that fifteen persons sat down to supper on one small fowl, a piece of stewed meat, and a few loaves of bread, not sufficient for three hearty eaters. However what was wanting in provisions, was, as much as possible, supplied by the kindness

and attention of the Governor to our people.

On the 17th, we shifted our station nearer the continent, to be in with the land. I went on shore with the watering party, but the surge was so remarkably high, that to get the boat near the beach was impossible. A canoe came off, with an Indian, and conveyed us, one at a time on shore, taking the advantage of the returning wave ; yet it was with the greatest difficulty we arrived at the beach. Our boat continued to lay to, off and on. The Indians, who are in general expert swimmers, brought our casks safe to the watering place. We found two or three wells ; but the water came so slowly, that had we continued a month on shore we could not have procured a sufficiency for our ship. However we met with some palm trees, which we tapped, and had good wine,

The

The palm tree is remarkably strait and smooth, and some grow to the height of one hundred feet. The wine is extracted from the trunk by making an incision at the top, and placing gourd bottles underneath, into which the liquor is conveyed. The natives here are stout and robust, and are equal in stature to the largest Europeans; their colour is swarthy, or dark brown; they have not the flat nose, or thick lips of the other Indians; but are savage in their behaviour, and great thieves. In the course of the day, some of the chiefs, who appeared to possess a considerable share of authority over the others, came down to the watering place. I exchanged some necklaces of glass beads for their collars, made of leather, very curiously stitched, containing Arabic characters as a charm against sickness and witchcraft, in which the Indians have great faith; and those of any note generally wear them round their necks; for, like all uninformed nations, they are strongly addicted to superstition.

In the evening we were under the necessity of having a rope fastened from the boat to the shore, to assist those that could not swim, in running through the surge to the boat. When we stript ourselves, the natives took the opportunity to make free with some of our cloaths. At length we arrived safely on board, happy to feel ourselves out of the power of such inhospitable wretches.

On the 19th, at the instance of the subscribers in general, we sailed immediately for Bulam, which, without the least difficulty, we made on the 24th of May. This island, when viewed from our ship, formed one of the most beautiful prospects in nature. It is situated at the mouth of Rio Grande, in Lat. $10^{\circ} 30'$. North, and contains near four hundred square miles,

On the 25th, we sent a boat out to sound; on her return we shifted our station, and cast anchor close to the shore. On the 26th, in the forenoon, we manned and armed three
boats,

boats, went on shore, took possession of the island, and hoisted the British flag. We had a jovial day, each flattering himself with the pleasing idea of acquiring, by his industry, a sufficient fortune to enable him, in a short time, to return to his native country in a state of independence.

On the 27th, several of the subscribers and settlers went on shore, and began to clear the land. In the afternoon of the same day, a small sloop came hovering about the mouth of the harbour; on which we manned a boat, and I was one of the party that went in chase of her; when she immediately made all the sail she could to get away. Notwithstanding, we at length came up with her, and boarded her. She proved a small Portuguese trader, and had six blacks on board. The master, who spoke the Portuguese language, informed us it was Bulama of which we had taken possession; but advised us not to continue it, until we had made a palaver (or talk) with the owners;

for the island belonged to the Canahæ and Bessago Indians, who were very hostile to Europeans. At our earnest persuasion, the master returned with us on board our ship, when he repeated the same information concerning Bulam.

On the 28th, a number of our people, taking with them provisions, arms, &c. set out in order to view the interior part of the island. On the 29th, in the evening, this party wantonly fired the dried grass and trees on the back part of the island, which continued burning for several hours, with great rage and fury; and although our ship was at a great distance, we heard the crackling of the trees very distinctly. It was a very awful sight, and appeared as if the firmament had been on fire; this was a very imprudent action, as it certainly alarmed the natives of the adjoining islands. On the 30th, being on shore shooting, we were surprised by the arrival of a war canoe full
of

of armed Indians, landing on the beach: We armed and marshalled our men for battle, in order to receive them properly if they came with any hostile intention, and immediately a consultation was held, at the conclusion of which, I was deputed with a flag of truce to parly with them. When I arrived at the canoe, which was not until I was up to my middle in mud and water, I found near forty men on the beach, and in the canoe, armed with muskets and cutlasses. On my inviting them to our tents, they answered, in the Portuguese language, they were going round the land: and accordingly, finding us too well prepared to receive them, they put off to sea.

These men were stout and tall, but had very disagreeable features, their lips being exceedingly thick, and their noses remarkably broad and flat. Their complexion was of a coal black, and they had no sort of cloathing, except a small leather apron behind,

hind, which was brought forward tight betwixt the thighs, and tied to the middle.

A number of fettlers with their wives and children, having since our first landing, continued dwelling on the island, in small huts erected with trees, and in tents; it was agreed, in order to prevent being surprized in the night by the Indians, that all our people should return on board. This was accordingly performed, leaving our tents standing, with the kitchen furniture, linnen, &c. Upon our going on shore the following day, in quest of water, we found the Indians had relanded in the night, and taken away the tents, and every other article. On our return on board, we related the circumstance, and I offered to go in a boat to Bissão, a settlement belonging to the Portuguese, in order to procure proper information concerning Bulam; declaring that I conceived keeping possession of the same without purchase was improper and dan-

dangerous : but it was determined not to send to Bissao, until the arrival of the Hankey and Beggar's Benison. Several of the settlers, who had been out to view the island, returned, and brought with them two elephant's teeth, that had been dropt ; but the people came on board in a very bad condition. Two or three of them had been fatigued to such a degree, that they had left their muskets behind, and not having marked the spot, it was impossible ever to recover them ; their provision also having been exhausted, they had subsisted on wild fruit. These reported, that they found the island clear of wood in many places, and covered with high grass ; the soil rich and fertile ; several large rivulets of wholesome water, and good lofty timber of various qualities, fit and convenient for every purpose. They remarked, in particular, the manchineel tree, the fruit of which, though uncommonly delightful to the eye, contains one of the worst poisons in nature. To its
ill

ill effects, one of our people was very nearly falling a victim : for having tasted the liquid that flows from the tree, his mouth, in an instant, swelled to an amazing size. The country is somewhat flat, except in the middle, which is mountainous ; in many places the land had been cleared, and cultivated for rice. The party met with large droves of buffaloes, deer, antelopes, and wild hogs, with flocks of Guinea fowls and pigeons. Of fruits, they observed, wild plumbs, grapes, and the four pap.

Our people still continued to clear the land, and began to build a block house, and many of them with their families, again slept and dwelt on shore. On the 3d day of June, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, hearing the report of guns, we immediately armed two boats, and sent them on shore, to assist our people in case of danger. On the arrival of the boats, they found the Indians had landed on the other side of the island,

island, and surpris'd our people, who were engaged clearing the land : They had killed five men, and with savage barbarity, hacked them to pieces, wounded several, and taken five women and three children prisoners. They had also taken away the tent, sixty stand of arms, shot, powder, a quantity of deals that were carried on shore for the purpose of building, besides wearing apparel, linen, and several other valuable articles, Seeing what pass'd on shore, we fired our guns, in order to secure the retreat of our people. Many, at the hazard of their lives, were obliged to swim on board, the Indians having followed them down to the beach ; they had even the impudence to fire at our ship, with our own muskets. It was late at night before we had re-embarked all our people, several having been out shooting. The noise and confusion that reigned at that period on board our ship is not to be imagined ; some bewailing the loss of their husbands, others of their fathers, and some of their

their wives and children, a scene too shocking to dwell upon.

On the 4th of June, our watering casks being on the island, we agreed to send on shore three of our boats well manned, and each person provided with eight rounds of powder and ball, to bring them off, and bury our dead ; the ship firing her guns to cover our landing. I was one of the party, and being of the advanced guard, I must confess, expected a shot or two ; for as we pushed on towards the woods, the rest of the party remaining on the beach, the Indians might have fired upon us unperceived from behind the trees. We secured all our watering casks, except two, which the Indians had taken away ; but it was deemed imprudent to venture round the point to bury our dead, not knowing the strength of the Indians. Give me leave to say, my friend, had the governor taken my advice, and permitted me to have gone to Bissao for
informa-

information concerning the island, or if a proper place had been appointed as a rendezvous for the other ships, this unfortunate accident might have been avoided : and indeed he probably would have done the former, had he not been over-ruled by Mr. Hankhorn, the super-intendant of our ship.

After our return on board, we set sail for Biffao. When we were under way, the Indians came down to the beach, attired some in men's, and others in women's apparel, belonging to our people whom they had murdered, and taken prisoners, hallooing, hooting, and treating us with contempt and derision. Before we made the harbour of Biffao, we espied the Hankey and Beggar's Benison at anchor in the roads, they having arrived the day before, and sent to Biffao for information concerning Bulam : and, notwithstanding the misfortune of our recent loss, much joy prevailed at the meeting of our comrades. This day, two of our

C

wounded

wounded men died, and either on account of fatigue, or the unwholesomeness of the climate, a number of our people were taken ill with fevers, and our decks were covered with them, as the excessive heat in the steerage and cabin was to them insupportable.

On the 6th of June, we anchored off the town of Bissao, and saluted the fort. This settlement is situated on the banks of Rio Grande, and has a fine harbour, in which there is room and depth of water for almost any number of the largest ships ; but the climate is hot, boisterous, unwholesome, and subject to great storms of rain and wind, and tornadoes. Yet the land contiguous to this town is exceedingly pleasant, and the soil is rich and fertile, watered by a great number of rivulets, and covered with good timber and fruit trees. The cabbage tree, remarkable for the hardness of its wood; the palm tree, which affords the oil, as well

as the wine, so much esteemed, and in constant use with the Indians, both in food and in medicine ; and the soap tree, the berries of which, when properly prepared, answer all the purposes of soap for washing, grow here spontaneously. A royal company from Lisbon is established here, in order to supply the Brazils with slaves ; and four vessels of 800 tons each touch at this place from Lisbon, in their voyage to the Brazils, in order to receive them. The fort is very strong, and was 7 years in building. Before it was completed, it cost the Portuguese upwards of 700 men, who died through fatigue, and the insalubrity of the climate. It covers more than two acres of ground, and contains a number of houses, store-houses, public offices, a church, and the governor's house. At this fort they keep a constant watch, in order to defend the town from any sudden alarm of the neighbouring Indians. They have a government, civil and military, and the garrison is composed chiefly

of transports from St. Jago, and other parts. We were well supplied with fresh stock at the following low prices: a small ox, 6 bars; a goat and kid, 2 bars; and 12 fowls, 1 bar; a bar being on an average of the value of 2s. sterling in European goods. Milk was cheap, and limes were very plentiful; but vegetables were scarce and dear, as was rice, on account of the slothfulness of the natives, who are so very lazy in cultivating their lands, that, did not the fertility of the soil afford them subsistence, they would starve.

The cotton tree and indigo plant grow well here, but the inhabitants of Bissao, who are for the most part Mulattoes and Blacks, turn their attention solely to trade.

I underwent great fatigue on my first arrival, being obliged to act as interpreter in the Portuguese language for our people, with the governor and others.

On

On the 8th of June, through the interest of Mr. Silva de Cardozo, a very respectable merchant, we sent to Canabac, to treat for the ransom of the women and children, that were taken prisoners at Bulam. On the 9th, we had our audience with the governor, who received us with great formality and pomp at the fort. We passed through a file of soldiers, consisting of a set of ill-looking ragged Blacks and Mulattoes, some with old rusty muskets without firelocks, and others with sticks instead of muskets. The governor, who likewise was a Mulatto, informed us, it was a particular favour, that we were permitted to anchor off the town, no other nation, except the Portuguese, being allowed that liberty. After our audience, the governor accompanied us to his garden, which was like our orchards in England, and contained in great perfection, orange, lime, lemon, fig, guava, banana, cocoa nut; and plantain trees, as also pine apples, water melons, cucumbers, and cassava plants,

plants, with a few cabbages. In the midst of a serious conversation concerning the different treaties at present subsisting between the court of Portugal and Great Britain, the governor desired me to inform Mr. Dalrymple, that, if we had occasion for a supply of cabbages, he would provide us as cheaply as any person in the town; yet his whole stock, at that time, did not exceed thirty.

On the 14th, returned the sloop, that was sent for our people, who were taken prisoners at Bulam, and brought three of the women, and two children; one of the women and her child having been taken by another nation of Indians, called the Bissagos, and both died soon after they were ransomed; and the other woman, a very respectable lady, of the name of Gardener, whose husband had died of his wounds, was cruelly murdered immediately after she was taken, not being able to travel on account of lameness. They arrived quite naked, having been stripped at the time they

were taken. For their ransom we paid two hundred and fifty bars.

As I found the scheme of colonizing Bulam not likely to take place, having already buried several of our people, and a great number being still on the sick list with fevers, I took the resolution of leaving the Calypso, and abandoning the undertaking, and went on board an American slave brig, from Boston, bound to the Havannah. On the 26th day of June, the ships belonging to our company sailed for Bulam, having first agreed with Captain Moore, of the American brig, to accompany Messieurs Beaver and Dobbins to Canabac, in the Beggar's Benison, in order to purchase the island of Bulam.

During our company's stay here, we had a solemn offer from the king of the Pappels of sufficient land, to establish a set-

tlement in his country; but this being in the vicinity of Bissao, to avoid giving offence to the court of Portugal, who are jealous to an excessive degree, we declined accepting his kind and generous offer.

The natives of Papel mark their bodies in various forms, called tattooing, and also plait their hair in a very curious manner. They appeared a very inoffensive people, and very desirous of an intercourse with the English. The Portuguese at Bissao, although an adjoining settlement, are seldom or ever on terms of real friendship with them. The clothing of the Papels consists of different kinds of St. Jago cloths, tied round their middle, some of which sell for 60 bars. The greater part of their food is boiled rice, with palm oil. They are extremely fond of a fruit called kola, which is about the size of a large Spanish chestnut, is enclosed in a thin husk, and tastes very bitter,

bitter. It is not only valued for being pleasant to eat, but for it's medicinal qualities in removing all disorders that particularly affect the liver, diseases very prevalent amongst the natives. These people are remarkable for their cleanliness, and both men and women wash themselves morning and evening in running water. In their persons they resemble the Indians on the continent of Goree, except in their colour, which is jet black. Their weapons were muskets and cutlasses, procured from the traders; and for defence many of them used wooden shields. They manufacture a coarse cotton cloth, about a quarter of a yard wide, which passes currently for money; twenty stripes of a yard long being reckoned at a bar. Their canoes are large, well made, and capable of carrying twelve hogsheds of tobacco with ease and safety. Their houses are square, about twenty feet long and ten wide, with a shelving roof supported by posts; the roof is covered with palm leaves, and

and the floor with long grafs, over which they lay mats, and upon thefe they fit in the day, and fleep at night.

The country is diverfified with hills and vallics ; the land is extremely fertile, and abounds with plantains, yams, limes, and bananas ; and there are plenty of oxen, pigs, goats, and fowls.

On the 1ft day of July, returned captain Moore in the Beggar's Benifon. He informed me, that on his arrival at Canabac a folemn palaver was held with the kings of Canabac and Beffago, and the head men of thofe places ; when, after a long and ferious confultation, the ifland of Bulam was purchafed of them for the fum of 473 bars, befide feveral valuable presents to the chief natives in European commodities. Captain Moore alfo informed me, that, on his arrival at Bulam, with the deed of purchafe, poffef-

possession was formally, and indeed justly taken of the island; but not on the side on which we landed at the time of the massacre of our people: that on the next day a general meeting was held of the subscribers and settlers; and as several of them were in a bad state of health, it was agreed, that the *Calypso* should, with all convenient speed, depart for Europe, and that such of the subscribers and settlers as were determined to return home, should be at full liberty to take their passage on board the said ship. Accordingly, upwards of one hundred resolved to sail for England.

I still continued at Bissao, and slept on board the brig, the town being unhealthy and dangerous; for the Portuguese, except two or three families, were under the necessity of returning every evening into the fort; as the *Antulas*, a neighbouring nation of Indians, are continually at war with them, and often come down on a dark night,

night, plunder the town, and murder such of the inhabitants as they take. However, as an Englishman, I have often travelled into the Papel country, and met the Antula Indians, and found them very friendly.

At a conference I had with the king of the Papels, another king, and several of their head men, they assured me, it was their general rule and custom, that when they were at war, and took prisoners, or when any of their subjects committed crimes, they kept them until some European ship came on their coast to trade, or as long as their provision of rice lasted; but immediately, when their rice began to fail, or if no trading vessel came to purchase them, they put them to death without any ceremony. Several times have I witnessed, that when a slave has been brought down from the country, he has appeared sad and dejected; but as soon as he was purchased, and taken on board a ship, he has been cheerful and quite contented.

contented. I am not concerned, directly or indirectly, in the slave trade, therefore you may rely on my information. The usual price of slaves on this part of the coast, is from one hundred to one hundred and twenty bars, in European commodities. Elephants teeth are sold, the largest size, at the rate of two pounds per bar, and the smaller, three pounds.

Whilst I was at Bissao, we had several sudden and violent storms of wind, rain, thunder, and lightning, attended with a furious swelling of the sea; in one of which a flash of lightning shivered our maintop-mast and yards, and struck down all the men that were on deck. At the same time, several roofs of the houses in the town were torn off. The governor, Mr. Silva de Cardozo, and the other principal inhabitants of Bissao, treated me with great attention and civility, and provided me with every necessary I had occasion for; and on my departure,

ture, his excellency made me a present of a fine calf, and Mr. Silva de Cardozo, gave me fowls and sweet-meats.

I remained at Bissao near two months, when the brig, having completed her purchase of slaves and goods, consisting of ivory and wax, sailed for the Isle de Los ; but on the next night, being at anchor off the island of May, we encountered a severe gale of wind, that parted our cable, and we lost our anchor. Our ship not being provided with another, it was with the greatest difficulty we escaped being on shore, and had this happened, our situation would have been miserable indeed, the natives being cruel and inhospitable to strangers.

Immediately as we got clear, we sailed to the new settlement of Bulam, in order to procure another anchor. On our arrival at the said place, we found the people had cleared upwards of ten acres of land, but they were

in general in a sickly state, dying one or two in a day : indeed, I attribute their sickness and dying so fast, more to a want of cleanliness, and attention to their health, as also to the great fatigue they had endured, than to the air of the island ; for the climate here, though hot, appeared to me fine and healthy, being refreshed with cooling gales, that blew morning and evening from the sea and land. The country is delightful ; the sea abounds with the most delicious fish of every kind, and the island with buffaloes, deer, antelopes, wild hogs, and Guinea fowls, doves, pigeons, and several sorts of small birds. In it are also many elephants, monkeys, and parrots ; and the elephants had often come down to the beach to bathe in the sea.

A garden that had not been planted above a month, was in a high and forward state of cultivation, and the several seeds brought from Europe were in a thriving condition
and

and healthy. The cotton, bananas, plantain, and orange trees, with the indigo plant, pine apples, yams, and cassava root, were in a flourishing way.

The harbour of Bulam is so secure, deep, calm, and sheltered from the wind, that one hundred sail of the line might ride as safe in all weathers and winds, as if in dock. Certainly, if this island had been in the possession of the Sierra Leone company, with their capital, it would, in a very short time, become second only to Jamaica, if not its equal. I have been to that island, and the little knowledge I have of the same warrants me to say, that the soil of Bulam would produce the sugar cane, indigo, cotton, pimento, and ginger; so that when the island comes to be properly settled, the inhabitants will soon be supplied, not only with the necessaries, but with the luxuries of life in great abundance.

We

We continued at Bulam sixteen days, having been obliged to send to Bissao for an anchor. During that time, I diverted myself on shore with shooting and viewing the country. A small island, called Arcas, opposite to the settlement of Bulam, being separated from it only by a small arm of the sea, and the adjacent land on the Continent, had been purchased of the kings of Ghinala, on account of the Association, for the price of three hundred bars in European goods. On these there is good timber, and the soil is, in every respect, as fertile as that of Bulam. On the return of the boat from Bissao with the anchor, we sailed for the Isle de Los, which we made in three days.

De Los is a small island near the entrance of the river Sierra Leone, not exceeding two miles in circumference, and belonging to Messrs. Hodgsons, African merchants, of Liverpool. It contains a few houses for the clerks, storehouses, and some huts. On the island are some lime and

D orange

orange trees, with a few plantains, and cucumbers, but scarcely any other vegetables. The chief factor resides on board the Factory ship. I went on board this ship, which had been a large Dutch East-Indiaman, and was provided with every accommodation, and dined with Mr. Harrock, the factor. They had near six hundred slaves between decks, prepared to embark for our West-India Islands. The greatest care and attention were obliged to be taken, lest the slaves should, from any misunderstanding, prove refractory and rise. During the night, having been comfortably accommodated with a bed on board, I was put in mind of a besieged fortress, "All's Well," having been called every quarter of an hour.

The number of sailors in the brig, since my first going on board, having diminished by deaths from her full complement to three persons, and the master being likewise confined to his cabin with sickness, the vessel
could

could not proceed for want of hands. I therefore was under the necessity of quitting her, and taking my passage on board a small sloop for Sierra Leone.

We were three days failing to that place. On our passage we experienced the most tremendous weather ; for upwards of twenty hours we had incessantly rain, thunder and lightning, with a rough and boisterous sea, expected every returning wave to sink ; our sloop being small and very heavy laden, we had no shelter from the weather, she being stowed full below. The crew, who managed the sails with great skill, were slaves belonging to Mr. Harrock at the Isle de Los.

It was evening when we arrived at Sierra Leone, and being dark, it was with the greatest difficulty I got on shore, the landing place at that period being very dangerous. I procured at a great expence part of a hut

D 2

among

among some Blacks, to dwell in, and made a very hearty supper on fish, porcupine, and squirrels. I found the Calypso from Bulam here, on her passage to England, but the people on board her were in general sick with the scurvy and fever, five or six dying in a day. It has happened, that two or three have dined in my company on shore in perfect health, when on their return on board, they have been taken ill, and I have seen them corpses in less than twenty hours. Before my arrival at this place, I had been near four months on the coast, and enjoyed in every respect a good state of health ; but now I begin to feel the bad effects of the climate of Africa, for I have been for some days very ill. The Calypso is under way for Old England, therefore I cannot enlarge.

I am, Sir,

J. M.

Sierra Leone, 28th Nov. 1792.

THIS is the first day, since I wrote you by the Calypso, that I have been able to take up my pen; having been for a long time confined to my bed with the country fever, but contrary to the opinion of the physician that attended me, who for some days expected my death, I am still among the living. At the commencement of my illness, a brig arrived from the island of Madeira, intending to sail for Europe in two or three days. I accordingly embraced the favourable opportunity, and agreed for my passage on board her; but my illness continuing, the brig, after waiting some time in hopes of my recovery, was at last obliged to sail. Since the fever has left me, I have continued very weak, and my legs have swollen to an amazing thickness; yet I have been obliged to hobble about in search of my daily pro-

vision, as I can assure you this colony has been for some time past at a very short allowance. I am obliged at times to give 2s. to the settlers for a small fowl; when I am able to procure them of the natives, they are considerably cheaper. We have been provided lately with turtle, fish, sweet potatoes, and yams. Vegetables, except the tops of sweet potatoes, are not to be had at present. We have also venison, fowls, doves, limes, oranges, pine apples, and cucumbers, with several sorts of plumbs, which the natives often bring down from the mountains to sell and exchange for European commodities.

Not to discourage the several subscribers to the Sierra Leone Company, having received every assistance from the Company's Servants, you will excuse my giving any opinion concerning the state of this colony, or the probability of its speedy success. The Company is certainly at an enormous
 2 expence ;

expence ; but it has a great capital to support it. All infant settlements are under some difficulties at the commencement, therefore, with perseverance, I have not the least doubt of the ultimate success of this ; but it may be considered in the light of a plantation of wood, where no advantage can be expected from it for some years. Mr. Dawes, the present Governor, is a man in every respect calculated for his situation, and of great abilities ; and he acts in the most upright manner for the benefit and interest of the Company.

This colony is situated on the river Sierra Leone, so called by the Portuguese from the number of lions that formerly infested the neighbouring mountains. The climate is in general unhealthy to Europeans, particularly in the mountainous parts ; the open country is not so bad, as it is temperate in the afternoon from the breezes that generally blow from the sea. The bay and entrance to the river abound with a great va-

riety of fish, such as gar fish, cavalloes, jew fish, soles, cat fish, sharks, and mullets ; and on the rocks are plenty of oysters. The country about the colony produces rice, oranges, lemons, plantains, bananas, yams, cassava, pineapples, and several sorts of white plumbs. In the mountains are the palm and cocoa tree ; indeed the country is over-grown with trees, so close together, that it is one continued forest. In the mountains are a great number of wild animals, as tigers, wild boars, roe-bucks, monkies, and serpents ; in the woods are doves, parrots, and parroquets. There are also deer, goats and fowls.

The native inhabitants are not so black as those of the neighbouring countries. The men in general are tall and well made ; the women have very pleasing features, but are short and robust, owing to their being constantly employed in labour. They are a very quarrelsome, impetuous, and revengeful

ful set of people, and on account of the least trifle will raise a palaver, in order to extort, as a compromise, spirituous liquors, to the use of which they are much addicted. They will part with every thing they have, nay, I am well informed, their chiefs often sell their people to procure them. At every religious ceremony, marriage or burial, and at their palavers, they drink to an excess, which generally creates quarrels, that seldom or ever terminate without some sanguinary act. Instances have been known at their burial ceremonies, which continue a week, of their broaching an hoghead of rum, and sitting round it until it was finished, hooting, singing their threnody, and beating the drum.

The men take upon themselves the perils of war, together with the toils of hunting, shooting, and fishing. From the several European ships that frequent the coast for slaves, they procure guns, of which they
are

are very fond, and use them with great dexterity. The women cultivate the land, make palm oil, spin cotton, and carry their produce to market. It is not uncommon to see a woman with two children in her arms, and a heavy load on her head coming down from the mountains, whilst her husband walks behind, without any incumbrance, except his gun, whistling and singing.

The cloathing of the women consists of a piece of cloth, generally blue or white, which is fastened about their middle, and capable of being brought up round their shoulders. The children adorn their middles with a net made of glass beads. The men's dress differs but little from that of the women's ; but they are very partial to European cloaths, and appear proud and pleased when they are attired in them.

Their houses, or huts, are low and thatched with straw. Some are round and others oblong.

oblong. Their furniture consists of iron pots to boil their victuals, gourds to fetch palm wine, a few earthen dishes, and a large pewter dish to gather their cockles and oysters in. Their bed is a mat, on which they sleep without any covering. Their food is principally boiled rice, herbs, fruit, cockles, and oysters, which they prefer to the greatest rarities. They are very fond of dancing, and generally spend their evenings in that diversion. Their music consists of a drum, made of a hollow piece of wood.

As to their religion, they believe in a future state, but do not seem to have any object of worship, except that they appear to pay some kind of reverence to the sun and moon. They have many superstitious notions, and have a high opinion of their several charms, which they constantly carry in a bag about their necks.

They make very good matting, some of which is finer, and in every respect better,
than

than any we have in Europe ; the coarser fort serves them to sleep on, the finer they barter with Europeans.

The Sierra Leone Company have purchased some land on the Boulon shore, lying opposite this colony, and have a plantation of sugar canes there. They employ at weekly wages a number of the natives, in order to cultivate this plantation ; which, though in an infant state, is in a very thriving condition. The country is flat, but the soil is rich, and produces great quantities of rice.

The king of Nambana, in whose territory the plantation is situated, a very respectable old man, has been here on a palaver. He is a great friend to the English, and takes great pains to affect their manners and maxims ; but his people, like almost all Indians, are given to intemperance in drinking spirituous liquors. He has a son now in England, at Mr. Thornton's, member for Southwark, and
Chair.

Chairman of the Sierra Leone Company, for his education. It is to be hoped, on his return to his native country, his ideas, by being under the tuition of able masters, and residing for some time in a civilized land, will induce him to inculcate into the minds of his countrymen, and neighbours, some notions of an omnipotent Creator, and of humanity, and dispossess them, in some measure, of that savage ferocity that characterises them.

I will relate a recent instance of their cruelty, which happened last week, not six leagues from this place. It shows, in the strongest manner, to what a degree of barbarity the minds of men are carried, when untamed by the refinements of polished society, and that no length of time is sufficient to allay their resentment. A Danish ship, coming to this coast for slaves, was traded with, and treated very justly on its arrival; but in the night, the crew not being on their guard,

guard, the natives availed themselves of the opportunity to seize the ship and cargo, and cruelly murdered every person on board. The excuse they gave for acting so unwarrantably was, that about sixteen years ago, a Dutch vessel touched there to trade, and stole some of their people. And the several settlers about this coast rather encourage them to such hostile acts, than the contrary, as some of them immediately purchased the ship and cargo.

I have endured many severe hardships since my first arrival at this part of the coast, occasioned by my late fit of sickness ; yet had I enjoyed my health, I must have expected some difficulties in an infant colony. The thunder and lightning are so very dreadful, that I have not words to convey an idea of them ; and the ground at present is covered with red ants, and other insects. The ants have often taken possession of a hut, and compelled the inhabitants to abandon it, otherwise they would have been in danger
of

of their lives, they come in such amazing droves. Perhaps in the course of time, when the land is further cleared, we shall get rid of such troublesome company.

Upwards of two hundred of the settlers, with several of the natives, continue to clear the woods; they have each a weekly payment in money, besides their allowance of provisions. They are much better situated in many respects than our labouring people in England; as the Company gives them every encouragement they can wish or desire. It is impossible to conceive the chearfulness with which they go to their daily labour at five o'clock in the morning, and continue till the afternoon, when each attends his domestic concerns, and cultivates his garden. In the evening they adjourn to some meeting, of which they have many, and sing Psalms with the greatest devotion until late at night. It is a pleasing sight on a Sunday to see them go to church, attired

attired in their gayest apparel, with content and happiness imprinted on their countenances.

A school is established here for the education of the children of the settlers, who are taught reading and writing. The several natives of the adjoining countries have begun to send their children to Sierra Leone for education ; therefore it may be presumed, that in the course of a few years, the inhabitants contiguous to this colony, will become useful members of society. The Sierra Leone Company have certainly great merit in reforming their black settlers, who before were a pest to the community, and had not the least idea of religion or morality, but are now so far reclaimed from their original degeneracy of manners, as to be equal at least to the populace of most civilized nations.

It is intended, immediately after a proper plot of land has been cleared, to remove
the

the town, and re-build it on a more uniform scale, a survey having lately been taken for that purpose. At present the huts, or houses, are chiefly made of wicker-work and mud, and the roofs are thatched with grass, which harbours great quantities of rats and lizards; but some of the most ingenious of the settlers have erected themselves very comfortable dwellings of wood.

The Company, at the first establishment of the Colony, sent out several large framed houses for the governor and principal servants, one of which they use for the church and school. Two framed hospitals, that have lately come from England, have been converted into apartments for the chief clerks; the settlers of colour having become inured to the climate so as to have no occasion for them. A good brick house has been built near the landing place for the storekeeper, at which a ware-room of

E

dry

dry goods is kept, in order to supply the settlers with European commodities, which are retailed out at a very moderate price. Also a brick warehouse is begun to be erected, which, when finished, will be capable of containing the cargoes of several ships. At present, the goods are kept chiefly on board the York, a large store-ship.

It would be needless in me to give you a description of the form of government of this Colony, as I am persuaded you were well acquainted with it prior to my departure from Europe. This I can assure you, justice is administered here with the utmost impartiality, and no crime is committed with impunity: on the contrary, every transgression is punished, either by whipping or imprisonment. Nay, if the act be of a heinous nature, the culprit is, by the first opportunity, sent to England to be treated according to his deserts. The last
sentence

sentence has lately been passed on one of the settlers, who, after a fair and candid trial, was convicted on the clearest evidence of having sold a male slave to a trade ship; a crime which must certainly be deemed here of the blackest dye; since the first institution of the Sierra Leone Company was formed, more with a view to abolish the Slave Trade, than for any great gain or advantage the Company expected to receive from the settlement.

I flattered myself with returning to my native country in the Harpy, having been promised my passage in that ship by the governor; but yesterday she sailed, leaving all her passengers behind, in consequence of a dispute which happened between the governor and the Captain, who was then under an arrest in the York store-ship, but by some stratagem, found an opportunity to get on board his own vessel, and immediately set sail for Europe. You will receive

ceive this by the Ocean, a small sloop,
dispatched on purpose to acquaint the Sierra
Leone Company of that transaction.

I am, &c.

J. M.

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